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S. J. HARRISON, Editor.

"Let us go on unto Perfection."

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REPORT

—OF THE—

National Convention Brethren Churches

—HELD AT—

WARSAW, IND., AUG. 23-27, 1892.

APPENDIX.

The following papers were read at the Conference, but were either not at hand when that part of the main body of the report was put in type, or deferred for other reasons.

Concluded.

CALL, QUALIFICATIONS AND PREPARATIONS OF MINISTERS IN THE BRETHREN CHURCH.

By A. D. GNAGEY.

I feel that in this question we have before us one of the most important of all questions. Could any thing more important come before this body, than the consideration of the Christian ministry? I almost tremble as I approach the discussion of this subject. The more so, as we have come to speak, not alone of the qualifications of ministers, but to suggest some plan and devise some means that may lead to a better and more thoroughly equipped ministry. This involves grave responsibilities. We are stepping on sacred ground; we feel our inability to grapple successfully with so great a problem. But we shall endeavor to contribute something—to lend a helping hand, in the effort to increase the usefulness of the Christian ministry.

The importance of a well qualified and consecrated ministry cannot be over-estimated. And never before, since the day on which Jesus sent forth his apostles, with a commission to preach the Gospel, was there a greater demand for such a ministry than now. The Gospel preacher meets with difficulties in his work to-day, never before encountered. Human nature, we are told, is always the same. This may be true, but the conditions of society have undergone a great change. A little close observation will reveal the fact that the social status of today is somewhat different from that of any other period of the world's history. Truly, we are living in a wonderful age. I say wonderful, not progressive only. The world is run by steam and electricity. All things are done hurriedly. We want to travel ten miles, in the time formerly occupied in traveling one. We girt the earth in eighty seconds, talk across seas and continents. The day when the minister could take two and one half hours to deliver his sermon has gone by. Paul once preached till midnight, but one of his auditors fell out of the window. Sleepers in church do not all drop out of the window, but if we were to continue our sermon till midnight, they would either all fall out or creep out. That is more than an audience of the nineteenth century could endure. The spirit of progress in the material world has been carried into the realm of the spiritual. The minister in these days must be prepared for many and great emergencies.

The pulpit is, or it ought to be, the greatest educator in the land. It is, of all human agencies, the greatest moral force in the universe. It has done more, is doing more now for humanity, than any other agency at work among men. The pulpit, with its sublime, lofty teachings, stands like a Gibraltar against the invasion of evil. It checks the growing worldliness of the human heart, and goes far to stem the tide of corruption. A greater disaster could not possibly befall the morals of the land, than that the pulpit should cease its teaching, and inculcation of pure, gospel principles.

Among all the public and private teachers of our time, no other exerts such an influence for good on human character as the minister of the Gospel. The common school teacher labors to develop the intellect of the child, and therefore occupies a responsible position as he impresses his own individuality on his pupils. But the preacher does more. He deals with truths, higher, loftier, and more sublime—truths, the acceptance of which changes human life and character and destiny. A pupil demonstrates a theorem in Geometry, and his acceptance of the proposition does not have any effect on his character. The Gospel preacher has a proposition from the Lord; he presents it to his hearers; Jesus Christ is the son of God, and the acceptance or rejection of it, will change the character and destiny of men and women, for time and eternity.

Twice four are eight is a fact—a truth; the worst liar in the universe believes it and acts it, but that does not save him from lying, nor cleanse him from spiritual defilement. But the minister of the Gospel deals in facts and truths. He sets forth a person, and truths concerning him, which no one can reject without serious damage to his character. He has to do with truths and facts that touch the higher life, even the divine in man. Jesus Christ, a person, Jesus Christ and him crucified, and raised from the dead, the central facts in christianity—nay in the history of the universe; this is the material with which the minister deals. He moves in a sphere above the material, teaches truths that are divine, that touch the higher, even the soul-life in man.

The organization shall be known as

There shall be three departments: General, State or District and Local.

There shall be:

1. A Board of General Supervision.
2. A Board of State or District Examiners.
3. A Board of Local Examiners.

1. The National Convention shall elect a Board of Supervision, consisting of one member for each State or District Convention, who shall serve until the convention following the one at which they are elected.

2. This Board shall organize with a president, a secretary and a treasurer. It shall have general supervision over state examinations, the statistics of the church, and perform such other duties as are hereafter defined.

3. Each State or District Convention shall elect a Board of Examiners, consisting of three members, to serve for a term of three years each, except in the case of the first election, one to be elected for one year, one for two years and one for three years.

4. This Board shall organize with a president and a secretary. It shall conduct all examinations of candidates for the ministry, and of ministers, and perform other duties hereafter defined.

5. Each congregation shall elect a Board of Local Examiners, consisting of three members, to serve for a term of three years, to be elected in the manner prescribed in article 3, whose duty it shall be to encourage available talent for the ministry. The pastor of the congregation shall be chairman of this board.

6. Candidates for the ministry shall apply to the Local Board, make known their intention to enter this sacred office of the ministry, and state the reason for believing that they have had a divine call.

7. The Local Board shall examine into the spiritual fitness of the applicant, his aptness to teach &c., and if favorable, shall so report to the congregation, which may by a majority vote call on or reject him.

8. If elected, the candidate shall enter upon a course of study, prepared by the General Board, and designated as *The Preparatory Course—One Year*.

9. When said course is completed, the candidate shall present himself to the Board of State Examiners, at the annual session of the convention, for examination.

10. If he passes said examination, the convention shall ordain and license him to preach the gospel; the candidate to take up the course of study prepared by the General Board, and designated as *The Advanced Course—Four Years*.

11. Examinations shall be held at the annual sessions of the convention, and at the end of each year's course of study.

12. One or more members of the General Board shall be present and personally oversee each state examination.

13. Applicants for examination shall notify the secretary of the State Board, three months prior to the time of his examination.

14. When candidates are elected by congregations, their names, addresses, age and occupation shall at once be sent to the secretary of the State Board, who shall forward the same to the secretary of the General Board.

15. After each examination, the names of the parties examined, together with the course and year of study, shall be forwarded to the secretary of the General Board.

16. All ministers may avail themselves of the benefit of this course and demand an examination.

17. The names of the members of each Local and State Board, shall be reported to the secretary of the General Board, through the secretary of the State Board.

18. Students desiring information in regard to their studies or the purchasing of books, shall apply to the General Board through its secretary.

19. Vacancies in the General Board shall be filled by the convention in the state or district, in which the vacancy occurs.

20. These rules and course of study shall apply to all who may hereafter enter the ministry in the Brethren church.

21. The General Board shall secure and keep a careful record of the names and location of all ministers in the Brethren church. All changes in location shall at once be reported to the secretary of said board.

22. The General Board shall also keep a record of each local congregation, number of members, location &c. All additions and losses are to be reported to said board.

23. The secretary of the General Board shall receive the sum of \$25.00 a year for his services.

24. Each State or District Convention shall contribute the sum of \$5.00 a year to the General Board, for printing, correspondence, services of the secretary &c.

25. These rules and this course of study shall be published in convenient form by the General Board, for the use of churches, each convention paying its share of the cost.

The preacher of the Word leads or ought to lead human thought. He adapts his teaching to the cultured, as well as the uncultured. He must be able to teach the man and instruct the child. He is pre-eminently a teacher in the realm of the moral and the spiritual. Herein lies real force or power. The highest manifestation of power is not seen in the physical. A great steam engine impresses us with the idea of power

Niagara is sublime, because of its almightiness, but these are not the highest expressions of power. The poorest of all forces are physical forces. When we reach the realm of the moral and the spiritual, we come into the region of real power. And this is the sphere of the Gospel preacher. Shot and shell, sword and gun, are not the forces that rule the universe. They play a small part in the world's forces. The man who sways the multitude—who moves an audience, is the man of real power. The man who inspires people with great ideas, with pure, noble thoughts and divine truth—the same becomes a personal factor in the world's forces. It is in the sphere of human thought—inspired thought, that we reach the highest expressions of power. *Thought* rules the universe. And to a large extent, and if he have the proper qualifications, the preacher has it within his power to mould this thought, give it shape and form; control it, and thus turn into channels that will lead humanity onward and upward along the line of true—even spiritual progress. Herein lay Christ's real power. He swayed men. It was not in his physical ascendancy that he displayed his greatest power. To feed and satisfy the heart-hungering soul of Nicodemus, was greater than the feeding of five-thousand with a few loaves and fishes. To lift up a soul from the degradation of sin into the very presence of God, is greater than to call Lazarus forth from the grave. The grave the devil digs in which to bury man's purity, uprightness and character, is deeper than that in which our mortal bodies are laid. The inculcation of Christian principles—Gospel truths and facts, in the human mind and heart, will make good citizens. Good citizens make good laws, for laws are but the expression of sentiment; and this the minister of the Gospel, if faithful to his calling, wields a powerful influence in the making of our laws. He becomes a law-maker without going to congress.

We are living in an age of doubt and inquiry; a nervous age; an age of restlessness and dissatisfaction. Marvelous changes are taking place in the religious world, in the field of religious thought and literature. The *Higher Criticism* is playing an important part in current religious thought. You can scarcely pick up a leading magazine of the day that does not contain some article on this absorbing question. It is a great fight and the battle is the Lord's! The Bible is under the microscope of historic criticism, but we now have no fears of the final result. The Christian ministry is called upon to defend the pure doctrine of the word—the doctrine held sacred by the church since the days of the Master. The ministry needs to be well equipped to meet the giants of opposition.

The minister needs to be well informed—he needs to be ready—to study, and by hard toil fit himself for a battle which is waged unto death. He needs to come in contact and acquaint himself with the best and greatest minds, past and present. He must command respect. Unless he appears before the public as one who has a right to speak because he knows, he can not expect people to look up to him as a teacher and leader. If he would gain the ear of the public, and exert an influence over them, he must prove himself worthy—must have something to say and know how to say it. His character must be above reproach. No amount of intellectual culture and ministerial dignity can atone for lack of character. Pure in heart, noble and dignified in his bearing, a teacher called of God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, full of the Holy Ghost, and the power of a new love—the love of God and love for lost souls. Thus shall he gather many precious ones, and in the end receive the welcome plaudit: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy rest." They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BRETHREN NATIONAL BOOK AND TRACT COMMITTEE. HELD AT MEYERSDALE, PA., OCT. 3, 1892.

According to arrangements made at the National Conference, the tract committee met at Meyersdale, Pa., Oct. 3, 1892, for the purpose of forming a permanent organization, and to prepare for the work imposed upon said committee. Members present: B. C. Moomaw, Buena Vista, Va., J. H. Knepper, Johnstown, Pa., A. D. Gnagey, Meyersdale, Pa., J. M. Olinger, Meyersdale, Pa.

The committee organized by electing A. D. Gnagey chairman, and J. M. Olinger secretary and treasurer.

To procure articles of incorporation under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, it was found necessary to add a fifth man to the committee. H. M. Berkley, Esq., of Somerset, Pa., was unanimously chosen and elected.

The following Constitution and By-Laws were adopted.

CONSTITUTION.

SECTION 1. NAME. The name of the incorporation shall be the Brethren's National Book and Tract Committee.

SEC. 2. The National Conference shall elect and perpetuate an executive committee of five members who shall constitute a Board of Trustees, living sufficiently near each other for frequent consultation, to serve for a term of two years. Said committee shall elect its own officers, make its own By-Laws, procure and distribute tracts and other publications upon best available methods, both in this and foreign lands, fill all incidental vacancies occurring in the committee, and make a report of its work, in-